

CLAIMS

1. A remote ordering system for use by at least one customer in placing an order for fulfillment at one of a plurality of affiliated merchants, said merchants operating a plurality of different merchant locations, comprising one or more servers for receiving and processing an order from said customer, said order identifying a specific one of said merchant locations for fulfillment of said order, and for transmitting said order to said specific one of said merchant locations for fulfillment by said specific merchant location.

2. The remote ordering system of claim 1 further comprising a database associated with said one or more servers, said database comprising information specific to each of said merchant locations.

3. The remote ordering system of claim 2 wherein said information is selected from the group comprising: product or service prices, order fulfillment capability criteria, payment criteria.

4. The remote ordering system of claim 2 wherein said information includes product or service prices.

5. The remote ordering system of claim 2 wherein said information includes order fulfillment capability criteria.

6. The remote ordering system of claim 5 wherein said order fulfillment capability criteria comprises times at which specific products are offered.

7. The remote ordering system of claim 5 wherein said order fulfillment capability criteria comprises an identification of times at which specific products are offered and an identification of specific products that are not offered at said merchant location.

8. The remote ordering system of claim 1 wherein:

said system includes information and parameters for operating said system;

each merchant location may modify certain of said information or parameters;
and,

a database is associated with said one or more servers, said database comprising information specific to each of said merchant locations identifying levels of authority for personnel of said merchant location for effecting modifications to said information or parameters.

9. The remote ordering system of claim 8 wherein said database further comprises information identifying levels of authority for personnel administering said one or more servers for effecting modifications to said information or parameters.

10. The remote ordering system of claim 8 or claim 9 wherein said information and parameters are selected from the group comprising: product or service price, applicable taxes, promotions, identification of employees, times at which specific products are available, refund processing, payment information, financial information, types of reports.

11. The remote ordering system of claim 9 wherein said information identifying levels of authority is organized according to a schema corresponding to a schema of said merchants locations within said plurality of affiliated merchants.

12. The remote ordering system of claim 2 wherein said information is organized in a hierarchy corresponding to a hierarchy of said merchant locations within said plurality of merchant locations.

13. A remote ordering system comprising:

a plurality of affiliated merchants, said merchants operating a plurality of different merchant locations;

one or more servers for receiving and processing an order from a customer, said order identifying a specific one of said merchant locations for fulfillment of said order, and for transmitting said order to said specific one of said merchant locations for fulfillment by said specific merchant location;

a database associated with said one or more servers, said database comprising information specific to each of said merchant locations, said information being organized in a hierarchy corresponding to a hierarchy of said merchant locations within said plurality of merchant locations.

14. A method for processing a product or service order from a wireless device for fulfillment at a specific outlet location in a chain of associated outlets, comprising:

maintaining a database of products or services offered at each outlet in said chain, said database including information identifying items as being offered by several pluralities of said associated outlets, the characterization of said pluralities corresponding to the organizational structure of said chain of associated outlets; and,

communicating to said wireless device a list of items available at said specific outlet location.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said database further comprises order fulfillment capability criteria referable to each of said associated outlets, said criteria being selected from the group comprising time of day, products offered.

16. The method of claim 14 or claim 15 wherein said wireless device is a mobile device.

17. A method for processing a product or service order from a wireless device for fulfillment at a specific outlet location in a chain of associated outlets, comprising:

maintaining a database of products or services offered at each outlet in said chain, said database including product or service availability criteria, said criteria being associated with said associated outlets according to each of said associated outlet's relationship with said chain; and,

communicating to said wireless device a list of items available at said specific outlet location.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein said database further comprises order fulfillment capability criteria associated with said associated outlets according to each of said associated outlet's relationship with said chain, said criteria being selected from the group comprising time of day, products offered.

19. The method of claim 17 or claim 18 wherein said wireless device is a mobile device.

20. The method of claim 17 or 18 wherein said criteria is associated in said database with said associated outlets according to a schema corresponding to a schema of said merchant locations within said plurality of merchant locations.

21. A method for processing a product or service order from a wireless device for fulfillment at a specific outlet location in a chain of associated outlets, comprising:

maintaining a centralized database of products or services offered at each outlet in said chain; and,

communicating to said wireless device a list of items available at said specific outlet location.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein said wireless device is a mobile device.

23. The method of claim 14, said database further comprising security information for selectively authorizing certain aspects of the processing of said order, said security information including criteria associated in said database with said associated outlets according to a schema corresponding to a schema of said outlets within said chain of associated outlets.

24. A method for a specific merchant outlet location in a chain of associated outlets to fulfill a product or service order from a mobile customer, comprising:

prior to receiving said order, communicating to a remote ordering system a plurality of criteria governing order fulfillment at said specific outlet location;

receiving said order;

fulfilling said order;

dispatching to said remote ordering system an acknowledgement of fulfillment of said order; and,

said specific outlet location not engaging in the delivery of order fulfillment capability information directly to said customer or in the processing of payment from said customer.